

GRANDMOTHER'S BOAT

THE QUEEN'S PARROT & THE KING'S APE

by Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

The boat goes a-sailing.
Grandmother's boat goes a-sailing,
Girija's grandmother's boat goes a-sailing,
Grand-daughter Girija's grandmother's
 boat goes a-sailing
On a long voyage!
Grandmother's luggage was carefully
 thought out,
Every item was carefully brought out,
And put in the boat,
Grandmother's boat,
Girija's grandmother's boat,
Grand-daughter Girija's grandmother's
 boat.

Of what did the luggage consist? I wonder!
Could I have an idea of the list, I wonder!

A watch and a chain,
A crutch and a cane,
A basin, a mug,
A broom and a jug,
A pillow, a rug.
A towel, a soap.
A nail and a rope.
A loaf of brown bread.
A reel of white thread,
A needle, a pin,
A boot-polish tin.
A berry, a plum,
A bottle of gum,
A biscuit, a toffee,
A jugful of coffee.
A ball of old string.
A pearl earring.
A ruby, a crystal,
A sword and a pistol,

A curtain, a chair,
A wolf and a bear,
An apple, a fig,
A cow and a pig,
A mango, a grape,
A turtle, an ape,
A pencil, a pen,
A duck and a hen,
A brick
And a stick
And a pot
And a cot.
A parrot,
A carrot,
A bottle of malt.
A bottle of salt.

One kilo of rice.
One kilo of spice.
One kilo of wheat.
One kilo of meat.
A bowl and a dish,
A crab and a fish.
A silver-grey shawl,
A green parasol.
A purse
And a verse
And a gong
And a song.
A lamp and a taper,
A sheet of newspaper,
A big box of hard-board,
A small box of card-board,
A balm for a blister,
A baby transistor,
A cheap magazine.
A sewing machine,
A bundle of lace,
A spectacle case,
A cask and a casket,
A cloak and a mitten.
And inside a basket

A dear little kitten. . . .
miaaaao!

The boat goes a-sailing.
Grandmother's boat goes a-sailing,
Girija's grandmother's boat goes a-sailing.
Grand-daughter Girija's grandmother's
boat goes a-sailing.

There is no knowing
As to where it is going.
As to where, as to where, as to where
It is going. . . .

What happened then?
Why do you ask me?
Ask my pen. . . .

With terrible teeth and throbbing throat.
A terrible crocodile followed the boat,
Grandmother's boat,
Girija's grandmother's boat.
Grand-daughter Girija's grandmother's
boat. . . .

And, then, with a smile
Of cunning and guile,
The huge crocodile
Pulled down each particle
Of every article,
Pulled them all down with remarkable ease!

What did the crocodile pull down, please?

A dear little kitten
Inside a basket.
A cloak and a mitten,
A cask and a casket,
A spectacle case,
A bundle of lace,
A sewing machine,
A cheap magazine,

A baby transistor,
A balm for a blister.
A small box of cardboard.
A big box of hard-board.
A sheet of newspaper,
A lamp and a taper,
A song
And a gong,
A verse
And a purse.
A green parasol,
A silver-grey shawl,
A crab and a fish,
A bowl and a dish.
One kilo of meat.
One kilo of wheat,
One kilo of spice,
One kilo of rice.
A bottle of salt,
A bottle of malt,
A cot
And a pot
And a stick
And a brick.
A carrot,
A parrot,
A duck and a hen,
A pencil, a pen,
A turtle, an ape,
A mango, a grape,
A cow and a pig,
An apple, a fig,
A wolf and a bear,
A curtain, a chair,
A sword and a pistol,
A ruby, a crystal,
A pearl earring,
A ball of old string,
A jugful of coffee,
A biscuit, a toffee,
A bottle of gum.

A berry, a plum,
A boot-polish tin,
A needle, a pin,
A reel of white thread.
A loaf of brown bread,
A nail and a rope,
A towel, a soap,
A pillow, a rug,
A broom and a jug,
A basin, a mug,
A crutch and a cane,
A watch and a chain.

One after another,
One after another.
From top and under,
From top and under. . . .

But what was dear grandmother
Doing, I wonder.

During the while that the horrible creature
Of horrible feature
Indulged in his orgy of pillage and plunder,
What was poor grandmother doing,
I wonder?

Grandmother's age is a hundred and four
Her sole occupation, they say, is to snore,
Her sleep is so deep!
How deep is her sleep?

You could easily tell from the sound
of her snore
That grandmother's age is a hundred
and four,
Girija's grandmother's age is a hundred
and four,
Grand-daughter Girija's grandmother's age
is a hundred and four. . . .
And the crocodile knew it!

end